Building Bridges

Creating a Teamwork Culture in Your Center

Training Guide
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"Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

--Vince Lombardi
Workshop Overview

This workshop will help center directors develop a center culture that inspires teamwork and collaboration among center staff. Through group games and reflective activities participants will develop a sense of empowerment and connection to their team members. By creating a center culture that values collaboration, staff morale will be increased and productive decision making can occur at all levels of employment.

Time
2 Hours

Materials
Easel Paper
Markers
Pens/Pencils
Materials for a few of the team building Games

Key Concepts
By the end of the workshop participants will:

- Identify games and activities that empower staff
- Identify important concepts in developing a team
- Identify management strategies that support collaborative decision making and a team work culture

“Soloists are inspiring in opera and perhaps even in small entrepreneurial ventures, but there is no place for them in large corporations”.

- Norman Augustine CEO Martin Marietta Corp
Icebreaker and Teambuilding Game

**Things in Common**

1. Divide the participants into groups of four or five people by having them number off. Tell them that their job is to find 10 things everyone in their group has in common. Make sure to tell the groups that body parts don’t count and neither does clothing (we all have arms and legs and wear pants). This will encourage the groups to discuss their interests in more depth.
2. Tell the groups that one person needs to take notes and to be ready to report out to the group when they are finished with the activity.
3. At 7 minutes, give the groups a warning that they have 3 minutes left. Ask each group to share their lists with the whole group.

**The Hard Stuff**

Part of team building and empowering staff is creating a center culture that values collaboration. In an environment that values collaboration people believe that they are only as good as their weakest link. Employees who work in a culture that values teamwork demonstrate a commitment to group goals in their daily practices. Goals such as, increasing enrollment and increasing center quality can be attained more effectively when everyone is working toward them together.

Developing teams is a management skill that often takes a great deal of time and initiative to develop. As children, many of us competed in sports and were raised in environments in which emphasis was placed on “winning” and “coming out on top”. In many areas of our lives we achieve success because we strive to be the “best we can be”. Since these beliefs are deeply rooted in our culture it is difficult to reframe situations so that collaboration rather than competition is the determinate of accomplishment.

Using participative and democratic management styles does not mean that everyone has an equal vote in all decision making. However, it does mean that employees know that their manager will not make arbitrary decisions that are harmful to the center staff, children, or families. In environments that have a culture of teamwork, the relationship between staff and management is based upon trust, respect, and open communication. This culture can be created through management practices and activities that assist your staff in building relationships.
Top 5 Ways to Create a Culture of Teamwork

To make teamwork happen in your center, incorporate these principals into your management skills.

1. **Avoid the Lone Ranger** - Set a clear expectation that teamwork and collaboration are expected and non-negotiable. Establish that no one person has "ownership" over a certain process or area. People who "own" processes and areas often tend to restrict decision making when their processes are questioned. Let your staff know that individuals responsible for areas and processes in the center are open and receptive to ideas and input from others.

2. **Model Teamwork** - There are many reasons that people want to do things alone. These reasons include, ego, insecurity about the work because they either want to control everything, or because they fear being replaced by someone more capable, temperamental differences, and a tendency to underestimate the difficulty of a task. Make sure that you model teamwork and maintain your commitment even when the going gets tough.

3. **Identify the Value of Teamwork** - If the value of teamwork is formally presented to your staff, it is more likely that teamwork will become part of the center culture. The Company has set an example for you by highlighting teamwork in our Company vision, mission, and values statements. Post stories from newspapers and magazines that showcase instances in which individuals put the good of the team ahead of themselves. In addition, publicly praise staff members who sacrifice their time and energy so that the center can operate effectively or achieve a goal.

4. **Reward and Recognize Teamwork** - Give credit for successes to the team, not to individuals. If you are a good leader, you will also take the blame more often than you take credit for team success. If you do this, your team will always fight for you. Make sure that you focus most of your attention on the person who achieves results with others, rather than the "lone ranger", even if the "lone ranger" does a great job. Let your staff know that recognition and rewards depends as much on collaboration as it does on individual contribution.

5. **Incorporate 360 degree feedback** - Establish a culture in which staff members are comfortable giving feedback to co-workers and supervisors. Growth occurs out of the trial and error of personal experience. If staff members can effectively share experiences with each other, the team will experience a higher level of success. If you want teams to reach higher levels of cohesion, give them responsibility and authority. Do not hoard your power to protect your position. Give it away and you will be rewarded with empowered staff.
Activities that Foster Teamwork

When you think of teambuilding does the image of your group at a resort or retreat playing games of trust come to mind? Many organizations have approached team building this way. However, the wonderful sense of team that is created at these types of retreats fades as soon as the team returns to work. The reason is because the activities failed to effect the long term beliefs of the employees. Incorporating a teamwork culture into your worksite is the only way to make sure the sense of team sticks around long after the fun is over. In order to be effective the game approach must be supported by the management techniques discussed earlier and personal reflection. The next part of this workshop will focus on a few games and reflection activities you can use during staff meetings to foster a teamwork culture.

Choosing Teambuilding Games

When choosing teambuilding games it is important to consider the purpose and the mood that you want to convey. If your team suffers from communication issues, the game you choose will be different from the game chosen if you want to build team spirit. The guidelines below will help you choose activities for your team:

If you want to celebrate success choose games that:
- Develop team cohesion through friendly competition
- Allow participants to experience the thrill of winning
- Foster a strong sense of team spirit

If you want to build team spirit choose games that:
- Create excitement and enthusiasm for a new program or upcoming event
- Reinforce skills and behaviors that will be important for success
- Encourage positive interaction between staff members in different roles

If you want to build skills important for success choose games that:
- Build confidence in team member
- Encourage personal risk-taking and sharing
- Encourage people to accept responsibility
- Involve problem solving and decision making
- Involve setting and achieving goals
The Candy Bar Story

Directions: As you tell the story throw out the highlighted candy to your participants! Feel free to change the words around to meet your center's needs.

Once upon a time, there was an enchanted candy store. One day, a much stressed center director named Tootsie rolled into the store. Alas, she tripped! Down she went hitting her head as she fell. There she lay- round and round her brain swirled. Suddenly a vision appeared! She dreamed her center was going down the tubes!! She was losing enrollment!! There was a bounty on her head by her Area Manager!! “Woe is me!” she thought, “whatever shall I do??” Suddenly, the entire candy store came to life. “We will help you!” they shouted. “We will tell the quality care story! Everyone will want to enroll because of the high quality care.” “We will save the day for our Junior Mints and Sugar Babies,” said Mr. Goodbar.

“I will need some help,” he cried. Now and Later, we will help, “shouted the Three Musketeers. So off they went on a Spree.

At first there were Snickers. But as they began to tell the story of the wonderful interactions between teachers and children, and the increased level of quality at the center, everyone was impressed.

Everyone wanted to enroll. They lined up side by side-the Runts, the Nerds, the Kit Kats, the Airheads, and even the Sweet Tart from Baltimore. Tootsie’s center was saved!

Now all fairy tales have a moral. So what’s the moral of the story? I will tell you! If you get off your Whatchamacallit and tell the quality care story to parents and team mates; if everyone feels appreciated; and everyone knows how important it is to make children their first priority, then you too will hit Payday! You will get 100 Grand new enrollees and more! You will be walking on 5th Avenue. As a little Mento of my story, I would like to leave you all with my good wishes for success and lots of Hugs and Kisses!
Remote Control Race

This is a great activity for encouraging staff to plan and strategize together. In addition, the socialization aspects of this activity will carry over into the classroom and into other projects.

Directions
(15 Minutes)

1. Divide participants into teams by classroom, job title, or whatever groups are available.
2. Give each group a remote control car and instruct them to decorate the body with decorations they have to design.
3. Each team must appoint a "driver".
4. Set up an obstacle course on your playground or in a classroom. The driver of the car will need to go to a spot where they can not see the car.
5. The driver stays in one place and the team spreads out along the obstacle course and yells driving directions to the driver, who most of the time won’t be able to see the car.
6. The team that gives the best directions wins!
Navigating the Minefield

Materials
Masking tape border for playing "field"
Various objects
Several blindfolds

Directions
(15 Minutes)

1. Open up a discussion with your staff about things that are detrimental to functioning as a group or achieving a goal.
2. For each characteristic/action, throw an object into the playing space, the "minefield."
3. Have group members choose partners. One partner is blindfolded at one end of field. The non-blindfolded partners stand at the opposite end of the field and try to talk their partners through the minefield without running into any of the obstacles.

Guiding Questions:

1. What is the role of communication in achieving a center goal?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What processes are in place to help your group communicate (Ex-Suggestion box, Communication Notebook etc.)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Building Bridges
(15 Minutes)
In this activity, how well the team functions as a whole depends on how well the team members “bridge” the communication gap.

Materials
1 large newspaper for each team
1 roll of masking tape
1 pitcher of water
1 small bowl

Directions
Provide newspaper and masking tape to each team. Each team must, without talking, build a bridge strong enough to hold a pitcher of water, but tall enough to slide a small bowl under. Each team gets 7 minutes to discuss how they are going to build the bridge and 8 minutes to construct it. There is no talking during the building process.

Discussion Questions:
1. Who was the leader? (Was it a choice or did someone just take over)
2. Who was quiet?
3. Did anyone try to include the quiet person?
4. What did you get out of this experience?

"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships." --Michael Jordan
Mustard and Ketchup

Materials
Paper and Pencils

Directions
Divide participants into pairs. Each pair will need a piece of paper and something to write with. The goal is to come up with as many combinations as possible in two minutes (example: mustard and ketchup, salt and pepper, etc.). Use a timer to start and end the activity and provide a small prize to the pair with the most combinations.

Silent Shuffle

Materials
None

Directions
Divide participants into groups of 4 or more. Explain that you will give instructions for the groups to line up in a particular order without speaking, i.e. birthdays, height, shoe size, hair length. Each group needs to get in order as quickly as possible and then clap when they are done. If you want to make this a competitive activity, each team receives a point when they finish first.

It is a good idea to start with basic, non-threatening instructions for the first few line-up choices (i.e. shortest to tallest, or length of time with the company). You can make these line-ups as simple or as complicated as you would like.
“Newlywed Game”

Materials
10 pieces of paper for each person
Marker, Crayon, or Pen for each person
Facilitator for each small group

Directions
Have teachers get into pairs with someone they do not work with regularly. Give them five minutes to ask each other questions and get to know each other. Then split the partners up making two smaller groups. You will be the facilitator for each team. Each person needs to answer five questions about themselves and then five about their partner. For example, group A answers questions 1-5 about themselves and 6-10 about their partner, group B answers questions 1-5 about their partner and 6-10 about themselves.

Sample Questions:
1. (A) What color are your partner’s eyes?
   (B) What color are your eyes?

2. (A) What is your partner’s shoe size and favorite style of shoes?
   (B) What is your shoe size and favorite style of shoes?

3. (A) What is your partner’s favorite vacation destination?
   (B) What is your favorite vacation destination?

When they finish completing their answers, bring the group together and have partners stand together. Ask each question and have partners reveal their answers. If the answers match, the team gets a point.
ABC Game

Materials
None

Directions
To start the game, choose a category. Then simply work from person to person having each person list an item that fits in the category. For example, if the category was fruit: a=apple, b=banana, c= cantaloupe, etc.. You can decide what to do if someone misses (i.e., move to the next person, stop there, etc..) This game can be simply for fun or you can designate a winner. You can also use whatever categories you would like. Here are a few suggestions:

- Bands or musicians
- Movies
- TV Shows
- Books
- Songs
- Landmarks
- TV/Movie Characters
- Companies
- Foods
- Animals
- Beverages
- Cartoon Characters
- Cities
- Names
- Sports Figures or Teams
- Celebrities
- Candies
- Cold/Hot Things

Progressive Poker

Materials
Several decks of cards

Directions
This game is designed to “reinforce” appropriate interactions with staff members play progressive poker. Purchase several decks of cards. Every time you catch staff doing it “right” give them a card from the deck. At the end of the week play “poker” with the best hand (3 of a kind, a flush, etc.) winning a prize.
Play the Feud

Materials
Various Materials

Directions
At a staff meeting address recurring issues or content by planning a center-made version of "Family Feud". Divide staff in two teams. Ask questions and allow teams to provide their answers. Give points for correct answers and discuss the "why" or "what" behind incorrect answers. This concept can also be utilized with "Jeopardy" style questions.

The Mascot Game

Materials
Stuffed Animal

Directions
Choose an animal mascot for each classroom. Print two hand size pictures of each animal, laminate them and secure them to a Popsicle stick. The object of the game is to end up with as many mascots as you can. The game should go for a few days and have defined hours of play so play only occurs when most staff members are present. Mascots can not be kept on anyone’s person or hidden in classrooms. They should be placed in strategic, visible places in the classrooms. Teachers need to try to steal each others mascot while protecting their own. Classroom teams should work together and a prize should be awarded. This leads to lots of fun and giggles.
Center Scavenger Hunt

Materials
Various Materials

Directions
Hide a prize in the center. When teachers arrive in the morning give them a clue (each teacher or each classroom team). You can either give them a clue that leads to another clue or give them clues every hour that give them more and more details as to the prize location. If you have clues lead to other clues, be sure no one takes the clues so all staff can play.

What’s Cooking?

Materials
Balloons
Recipe Cards

Directions
Put names of random foods on balloons i.e., pistachios, cured ham, saltines, brown sugar, etc. Have each teacher hold a balloon. Put music on and instruct teachers to pat balloons around while the music is on. When the music stops they should group with three to five people and make an original recipe using the combination of ingredients they have. Do this a few times.
# Classroom Bingo

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<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Change a Diaper</td>
<td>Change A Display</td>
<td>Clean off the tops of the Cubbies</td>
<td>Help Another Staff Person</td>
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<td>Get Children Off Bus</td>
<td>Change a roll of Paper Towels in 2</td>
<td>Do a Load of Dishes</td>
<td>Clean the Bathroom</td>
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<td>Bathrooms</td>
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<td>Re-stock Your First-Aid Supplies</td>
<td>Fill all Empty Toilet Paper Dispensers</td>
<td>Fill All Empty Soap Dispensers</td>
<td>Compliment 3 Coworkers you Usually Don’t Work With</td>
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<td>Take Out the Garbage From the Playground</td>
<td>Clean Off 3 Faces in the Toddler Room</td>
<td>Do a Load of Laundry</td>
<td>Dust Off All of Your Shelves and Scrub Clean</td>
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## Rules

1. When a task has been completed bring your card to the Center Director to be initialed.
2. To do a task in another room, make sure both classrooms are properly supervised and ratios are maintained.
3. 4 in a row horizontal or vertical is complete. All complete cards will be entered in a weekly drawing for prizes.
4. If the entire card is completed your name will be entered twice in the weekly drawing.
Reflection and Personal Development

“It takes one to know one, show one, and grow one”
- John Maxwell

If you want to develop a teamwork culture in your center, you must consistently refine your skills and ability to work collaboratively with others. The reflection activities listed on the next few pages will help you plan how you are going to develop your staff as a team. You can also adapt these activities and use them to help your staff develop the skills needed to achieve collaborative success. Listed below are some additional teambuilding tips.

**Tips for Teambuilding**

- Form teams to solve real work issues and improve real work processes. Provide training in methods for solving issues so that the team focuses energy on the project, not figuring out how to work together to approach it.
- Hold classroom meetings to review projects and progress. If co-workers are not getting along, examine the processes they mutually own. The problem is not usually the personalities; it is usually that they often have not agreed on how to do something. Have ready meetings with staff each day to plan for classroom events and schedules.
- Build fun and shared occasions into your staff meeting calendar. Hold potluck suppers or have meetings in places where teambuilding activities can take place.
- Use ice-breakers and time limited fun team building exercises during meetings. Encourage a different staff member to bring a fun 10 minute ice-breaker to each meeting.
- Celebrate group successes publicly. Allow the team to take credit for the investment that they put into the centers success in gaining enrollment, managing labor, increasing parent involvement, or increasing the quality of care that is provided to the children.
Reflective Leadership

What are three areas in which you are knowledgeable and can help your staff develop?

What are three areas of weakness that you need to develop in order to make your center team more successful?

Who is one person to whom you should be giving more feedback?

Who is one person you should be seeking feedback from?
Take Action

This week, when attempting an important activity that you would normally take on alone, recruit at least one person from your team to help with the project. Choose a person who is close to the same skill level as you, whom you will not have to teach a number of things in order to accomplish the project, or choose someone who will bring his or her own unique talents and gifts to the project. Both before and after the project, list the pros and cons of working with another person. Use the reflective questions to examine your experience.

**Before Project**

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**After Project**

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**Reflection**

How did the center benefit from you working on this project collaboratively?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did you face any challenges to working collaboratively (ego, differences in temperament, control, underestimating difficulty of project)? What can you do differently next time?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Trust and Mistrust

Trust among team members is vital to the success of a team and in developing a teamwork culture in your center. Ask team members to answer the following questions and then discuss your responses when you meet with your team.

1. Why is trust among team members so important?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. What happens when you no longer trust someone?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. Circle the personal quality listed below that is most important to the success of your team.
   
   1. Character among team members
   2. Commitment to team and center goals
   3. Competence among team members
   4. Consistent performance of individual team members
   5. The ability of the team to hold together no matter how difficult it gets

   Why is the personal quality you selected important?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. Of the 5 qualities listed above, in which area does your team excel? How can you improve your team's skills?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
Leadership

You don’t have to be the leader to be a leader on your team. Often people assume that because they are the leader, they are leading the team and people are following behind. However, this may not be the case. In order to be a good leader it is important to continually develop your leadership skills. In order to develop you must:

- Acknowledge the value of leadership
- Put yourself on a leadership-development program
- Find a leadership mentor

Once you have added more value to yourself as a team player, you will be able to add value and influence others to help your team.

What I am doing to develop better leadership skills?
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Who are the people that can help me on my leadership journey?
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

My next step on my leadership journey is to:
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

“Ordinary people with a commitment can make an extraordinary impact on their world”
- John Maxwell -
Staff Motivation/Morale Building Ideas

- Traveling Trophies (Make one out of an empty, clean dish soap bottle for cleanest classroom etc.)
- Certificates for breaks, soda’s, late starts
- Do a service activity together
- Wipe board in bathroom with trivia, questions of the day, jokes, picture caption contest
- Breakfast or lunch for staff once a month
- Employee of the month parking spot
- Make business cards for teachers
- Hand out stickers
- Staff appreciation week
- Staff spotlight and employee of the month board
- Staff baby photo contest
- Star board (Bulletin board with blank starts and board so parents and co-workers can write thank you notes to staff and post publicly.)
- Appoint a social coordinator – someone who keeps track of birthdays and anniversaries and passes the card around
- New employee welcome bags
- Monthly contest- cleaning, best bulletin board, most process art
- Send personal thank you cards to staff at home
- Friendly Friday’s rotate the responsibility of bringing in treats for all staff
- Staff favorites- Ask them to fill out a form about a favorite drink, candy, collection, etc. so you can reward them with their favorites
- Yearly goofy award dinner i.e. most flexible gets bendy toy, most creative gets art supplies etc.
- Reward with funny money- have a basket with purchasable items
- Thank staff publicly
- Put balloons on car antennas
- Support the staff’s need for professional development
- Delegate jobs to staff that use/develop their skills
- Provide a clean, organized, cozy staff lounge
- Let teachers lead part of staff meetings
- Pass on parent appreciation
- Observe teachers and give constructive feedback-expect and look for change
- Give each staff member their own coffee mug
- Buy special things for teachers that you know they want for their room
- Have stress relievers in your office
- Have a sidewalk chalk contest
- Plant a garden together at your school
- Realize the importance of your role as a coach, mentor, leader and commit to your own personal growth, skill development and continued learning.
Helpful Hints Bag

**Stick of Gum:** To remind yourself of the sticky situation the children put you in!

**Penny:** For luck!

**Milky Way:** To let you know you are out of this world!

**Tootsie Rolls:** For the important “roll” (role) you play.

**Lifesavers:** To save you on those days when nothing seems to go the right way!

**Smarties:** For the extra brain power

**Rolos:** Because deep down “all” children are sweet!

**Starbursts:** To reflect the “burst” of happiness you bring to so many children!

**Snickers Bar:** To leek the laughter “snicker” in the day

**M& M’s:** Magnificent and Marvelous

**Zip-loc Bag:** Because teaching is your bag!

**Eraser:** Because we all need second chances

**Crayon:** To color the day bright and cheerful
Out of this World Staff Retention Ideas

- **Peanuts** – “We know this week was NUTTY, thanks for not crackin”
- **Lifesavers** – “Your help was a real LIFESAVER”
- **Flipz Pretzels** – “We really FLIPZ over you’re...”
- **Seed Packets** – “Have a BLOOMIN good day”
- **Magnets** – “Your (room, board, etc) is sooo ATTRACTIVE”
- **100 Grand Candy Bar** – “You’re worth even more to us”
- **Mints** – “You’re worth a MINT to us”
- **Candles** – “Thanks for LIGHTING UP the lives of the children in your care”
- **Super Balls** – “It was SUPER the way you..”
- **Extra Gum** – “Thanks for going the EXTRA mile”.
- **Kit Kats** – “You deserve an extra BREAK – attached extra 15 minute break coupon”
- **Potpourri** – “Your room is SCENT sational”
- **Bowling Passes** – “You BOWLED us over with your”
- **Note Pads** – “It was NOTABLE the way you..”
- **Highlighters** – “Your bulletin board is the HIGHLIGHT of your classroom”
- **Pencils and Pencil Sharpeners** – “Thanks for making a POINT of dong the WRITE thing”
- **Payday** – “You deserve an extra PAYDAY”
- **Rice Krispy Treat** – “Your attitude made today a real TREAT”
- **Chips (mini bags)** – “Thanks for always CHIPPING IN”
- **Silly Putty** – “It would be SILLY to think of our center without you”
- **Lottery Tickets** – “We are so LUCKY to have you”
- **Zingers** – “You put the ZING in our day”
- **Fritos** – “with coupons that say “ you are FREETTO go home early”
- **Jelly Beans** – “It has BEAN great working with you”
- **Stickers** – “Thanks for STICKING around longer today”
- **Erasers** – “Thanks for ERASING the clutter on your counter”
- **Teddy Grahams** – “You deserve a GRAHAMMY for the way you sang with the children today”
- **Certs** – “It was CERTAINLY wonderful the way you..”
- **Key Chains** – “Thanks for KEYping it together”
- **Pizza or Pizza Coupons** – “You are a SLICE above the rest”
- **Rulers** – “You have made a MEASUREABLE improvement in your classroom”
- **Pens** – “You have the WRITE stuff”
- **PLAYDOUGH** – “Thanks for MOLDING the future”
References


**Building Bridges: Creating a Teamwork Culture**

**Attendance Sheet**

Signatures on this document verify attendance and acknowledgement of receipt of 2 hours of training on teambuilding. This workshop includes training on activities and games that empower staff, important concepts in developing a team, and management strategies that support collaborative decision making and a team work culture.

Training Date: ____________________  Training Location: ____________________

Training Facilitator
Name: ____________________________  Title: ____________________________

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Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that:

Has successfully completed a course titled

Building Bridges: Creating a Teamwork Culture
(Date)